

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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DRAFTED BY: ARA:RBBENTLEY

APPROVED BY: ARA:RBBENTLEY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT BUENOS AIRES 1104, SENT SECSTATE 18 FEB

76:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 1104

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, AR

SUBJECT: BUSINESS STRIKE SUCCESSFUL

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0707

1. FEBRUARY 16 BUSINESS ACTIVITY HALTED THROUGHOUT ARGENTINA IN ONE DAY BUSINESS PROTEST STRIKE. STRIKE CALLED AND ORGANIZED BY RECENTLY FORMED PERMANENT ASSEMBLY OF SYNDICATED BUSINESS ENTITIES, APEGE (SEE REFTEL). ITS OBJECTIVE WAS PROTEST AGAINST GOA ECONOMIC POLICY AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WHICH STRANGLING BUSINESS ACTIVITY.

2. DESPITE STRONG OPPOSITION BY GOVERNMENT AND CGT LABOR UNIONS, STRIKE REPORTEDLY WAS OVERWHELMING SUCCESS. NEWS-PAPER ACCOUNTS SAY 90-95 PERCENT OF ALL BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN COUNTRY HALTED IN KEY SECTORS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, CONSTRUCTION, ETC. IN BUENOS AIRES

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NEARLY ALL COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS CLOSED TO SUPPORT STRIKE,

LEAVING ONLY ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES STILL OPERATING.

3. STRIKE OCCURRED IN GENERALLY CALM ATMOSPHERE ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SPORADIC BOMBING INCIDENTS. NO MAJOR LABOR-BUSINESS CONFRONTATION DEVELOPED. YESTERDAY (FEB. 17) BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN COUNTRY BACK TO NORMAL.

4. COMMENT: REPORTEDLY THIS WAS FIRST BUSINESS PROTEST STRIKE IN ARGENTINA'S HISTORY. FACT THAT BUSINESS HAS NOW UNITED IN OPEN PROTEST AGAINST GOVERNMENT POLICY IS SIGNIFICANT NEW DEVELOPMENT. CGE, AND WITH IT POLICY OF CONCERTATION, CLEARLY HAS BEEN BRUSHED TO SIDE. SUCCESS OF THIS FIRST INITIATIVE HAS RAISED BUSINESS MORALE. BIG QUESTION IS WHAT WILL APEGE AND BUSINESS SECTOR DO NEXT AS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS NOT LIKELY TO QUICKLY DISAPPEAR. HILL UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PRESS COMMENTS, BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS, LABOR STRIKES, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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